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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: APRIL 02, 2009

Summary: U.S. CENTCOM Chief General Petraeus' statement that "Islamic insurgents pose a growing threat not only to Afghanistan but to Pakistan's 'very existence'" dominated headlines in all newspapers on Thursday. President Obama's remarks made during a press conference in London that the "Al Qaeda is planning terror attacks in Pakistan" received prominent coverage. Newspapers highlighted a report that "12 militants were killed in the first-ever U.S. drone attack on Orakzai tribal agency." Reports of a rocket attack on a police van in Upper Dir that killed five personnel also received prominent display. All newspapers underscored reports that "Pakistan and Afghanistan pledged to expand cooperation in the fight against Al Qaeda and Taliban militants" during a summit hosted by Turkey.

Most major dailies continued to run analytical editorials on the precarious security situation of the country and the escalating pressure on Pakistan to deal with militancy and extremism. Commenting on General Petraeus' recent remarks, the mass circulation Urdu daily, "Jang," noted that "by overlooking or toning down such serious statements the government cannot appease the worried Pakistani nation." The center-right national daily, "The Nation," wrote: "As long as the mutual suspicions persisting between Washington and Islamabad are not removed, it will be hard to root out terrorism from Afghanistan and Pakistan." The pro Taliban Jihadi daily, "Islam," observed that "it is no more a secret that the big powers want to convert Pakistan into a battleground, and the new U.S. strategy is a formal announcement of this plan." End Summary.

News Stories

"Taliban Pose Risk To Pakistan Survival: Petraeus" "The News"
(04/02)

"Islamist insurgents pose a growing threat not only to Afghanistan but to Pakistan's 'very existence,' the Commander of U.S. Forces in the region, General David Petraeus, said on Wednesday. The Pakistan military has stepped up operations against the militants but more action was needed, Petraeus told the Senate Armed Services Committee."

"Al-Qaeda Planning Attack On U.S. From Pakistan: Obama" "The News"
(04/02)

"U.S. President Barack Obama said on Wednesday al-Qaeda was planning to attack the U.S. mainland from Pakistani soil and added that the

U.S. would chase and defeat the terror organisation wherever it was present in the world."

"Obama Advised To Address Pakistan's Concerns On Indian Role In Afghanistan" website "The News" (04/02)

"As the Obama administration moves to calibrate a fragmented approach toward Afghanistan in a regional perspective, top US experts have asked Washington to address Pakistan's concerns over the Indian role in its insurgency-hit western neighbor.... 'I think it is India's interest to ensure that its involvement in Afghanistan is transparent to Pakistan and the U.S. has a role to play in ensuring this,' Lisa Curtis, a former State Department Adviser, said."

"12 Die As Drone Hits Orakzai" "The News" (04/02)

"Three minors and two women were among the 12 people who perished in the first-ever U.S. drone attack on the Orakzai tribal agency on Wednesday. Sources told 'The News' that an unmanned CIA-operated spy plane fired two Hellfire missiles on the two-storey house of a militant commander Maulvi Gul Nazeer, also known as Gul Mullah, in Khadeezai village, about 35 kilometers northwest of Ghiljo, Tehsil headquarters of the Orakzai Agency."

"5 Killed in Dir Police Van Ambush" "The News" (04/02)

"Militants on Wednesday ambushed a police mobile van on the Dir-Kohistan Road in Upper Dir district, killing five police officials, including a station house officer and an assistant sub-inspector and injuring another two."

"Ankara Summit Resolves To Expand Anti-Terror Fight" "Dawn" (04/02)

"Pakistan and Afghanistan pledged to expand cooperation in the fight against Al Qaeda and Taliban militants during a summit hosted by Turkey on Wednesday."

"Ankara Summit Agrees On Fighting Militancy" "The News" (04/02)

"Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey on Wednesday vowed to increase coordination among their political, military and intelligence tiers to jointly fight militancy and terrorism and achieve greater economic cooperation to bring peace and stability to the region."

"Pak-Afghan Joint Efforts Needed To Stem Terror: PM" "The Nation" (04/02)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said that the present situation demanded joint efforts by both Pakistan and Afghanistan to contain the menace of terrorism and extremism. The Prime Minister said this while talking to a delegation of Afghan Parliamentarians, which called on him in Islamabad at the PM House on Wednesday afternoon."

"Naek For Pak, Afghan Joint Strategy To Eradicate Terror" "The Nation" (04/02)

"Acting President Farooq H. Naek has called for enhanced role of Pakistani and Afghan parliamentarians to work out an effective strategy to eradicate terrorism from the region. He was talking to a 10-member delegation of Afghan Parliamentarians, which called on him on Wednesday."

"Holbrooke May Bring 'Do More' Message" "The Nation" (04/02)

"The Special U.S. envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke will arrive in Islamabad on April 6 on a two-day visit to discuss the new U.S. policy for Islamabad and Kabul in detail with top Pakistani leadership, said a senior official in Islamabad on Wednesday asking for anonymity."

"Concerns In Pakistan Over New U.S. Plan, Says Lodhi" "Dawn" (04/02)

"Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan's former Ambassador to the U.S. and the U.K., has said that there are concerns in Pakistan about aspects of the new strategy unveiled last week by President Barack Obama. Speaking in Washington at a prestigious forum, she said that there

were positive aspects of the strategy review that accorded with Pakistan's views. But the dimensions of military escalation are cause of great anxiety. The decision to send over 17,000 troops and suggestions that the U.S. plans to intensify the use of unmanned Predator drones that will widen the war by extending it into western Pakistan provide grounds for concern."

"U.S. Bill For Tripling Aid Delayed In Senate" "Dawn" (04/02)

"The bill to triple U.S. economic assistance to Pakistan could not be introduced in the U.S. Senate on Wednesday as scheduled because of technical reasons, a Senate aide told journalists.... Despite the delay, the aide said, the Committee hoped to pass the bill after the April recess and send it to the full Senate in late April."

"The Myth Of Increased U.S. Aid To Pakistan" "The News" (04/02)

"When President Obama announced his new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, his pledge for \$1.5 billion annual aid to Pakistan was neither new nor any increase than what was provided in 2008 under 'Biden-Lugar Bill' No:S-3263, during Republican President Bush days.... Sources at the Foreign Relations Committee told 'The News' that the new draft known as 'Kerry-Lugar Bill' is 'markedly improved' than the previous 'Biden-Lugar Bill,' due to change in realities on the ground."

"U.S.-Funded Grant For Economic Betterment of Women" "The Frontier Post," "The Nation," "Daily Times," "Khabrain," "Jinnah" (04/02)

"The OneWoman Initiative announced on Wednesday that Pakistan's Kashf Foundation received a \$100,256 grant funded by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. This grant will be used to launch a microfinance program catering to rural women, allowing them to become self-sufficient and financially independent."

"Mohmand Tense After Death of 3 Troops" "Dawn" (04/02)

"Three soldiers were killed and four others injured when their vehicle hit a bomb in Safi area of Mohmand tribal region on Wednesday."

"Eight Rockets Land In North Waziristan" "The News" (04/02)

"Eight rockets, fired from Afghanistan, landed in North Waziristan tribal region on Wednesday, locals said.... No one was hurt as the rockets landed in vacant areas. Tribesmen living in the border area of Ghulam Khan while condemning the attack, demanded of the government to take notice of the matter or the tribal people will take action by themselves."

"Taliban Occupy Residence Of Ex-Minister" "Dawn" (04/02)

"A band of militants occupied the residence of former Federal Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Q leader Amir Muqam in Bahrain, some 64km north of Mingora, on Wednesday."

"10 More Swat Militants Released" "The News" (04/02)

"Sources said security forces under peace pact signed between the NWFP government and the Tanzim Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), released 10 more Taliban on Wednesday, while thousands of people staged a protest rally in Manglawar area, demanding the withdrawal of troops from residential areas and buildings of educational institutions."

"Militants Occupy Another Emerald Mine In Swat Valley" "The News" (04/02)

"More than 70 armed militants stormed the second famous emerald mine in Gojaraq Killay Amnavi area in Bisham on Wednesday and started mining."

"UN Relief Operations In Balochistan Suspended" "Dawn" (04/02)

"All UN relief operations have been suspended in Balochistan since the kidnapping of UNHCR official John Solecki."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Allies Must Respect One Another," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (04/02)

"Government of Pakistan must take the U.S. CENTCOM General Petraeus's remarks seriously about the possible military operations in Pakistani tribal areas. Our rulers and opposition leaders must sit together to evaluate the serious security threats, and evolve a common strategy to deal with this situation. By overlooking or toning down such serious statements the government cannot appease the worried Pakistani nation."

"Lack Of Trust," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/02)

"As long as the mutual suspicions persisting between Washington and Islamabad are not removed, it will be hard to root out terrorism from Afghanistan and Pakistan.... Pakistan's military and security agencies maintain that they are wary of the U.S. strategy in the region and fear that with the U.S. again leaving the region abruptly after fulfilling its agenda, a vacuum in Afghanistan could be filled by those opposed to Pakistan, and a collaboration between them and India would put Pakistan in a nutcracker."

"Pakistan Existence And Bold Policies," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (04/02)

"It is no more a secret that the big powers want to convert Pakistan into a battleground, and the new U.S. strategy is a formal announcement of this plan. Unfortunately, the local Taliban have also responded to this assertion by fighting this war also in Pakistan. It is a disastrous situation, and our political and religious parties must come forward to utilize their influence to ensure Pakistan's survival at this critical juncture."

"U.S. Propaganda Against Sensitive National Institutions," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (04/02)

"U.S. Central Command Chief General David Petraeus has said that as a last resort we can take action inside Pakistan. In an interview with U.S. channel Petraeus said some elements of ISI and Taliban have connections that we want to uproot.... Statements by American officials show that they want to achieve their nefarious objectives by forcing our institutions to shun Pakistan's interests and priorities. Negative American propaganda starts when our officials stick to their oath and faith and demonstrate patriotism...."

"Allegations Against ISI: U.S. Intent Seems To Be Dangerous," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 100,000) (04/02)

"Statements by U.S. officials that the U.S. reserves the right to carry out strikes within Pakistan when needed create fears that American intentions are not good. Before any such adventure, the U.S. should bear in mind that the drone attacks are already creating anti-U.S. sentiments here. The Obama administration should understand that any further operation by the U.S. could have devastating results. The drone attacks are giving a justification to extremists for terrorism inside Pakistan [as stated by Baitullah Mehsud]."

"PPP And PML-N Must Defend ISI," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (04/02)

"Had ISI cooperated with Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the latter would have never targeted Pakistani security personnel and facilities in several cities of Pakistan. In fact, the Americans are deceiving Pakistan with such baseless allegations, and instead of trusting them, we should defend Pakistan Army and ISI. And it is the responsibility of both PPP and PML-N as major political parties of Pakistan to come forward to protect our security and intelligence agencies from any harm."

"Petræus' Statement," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (04/02)

"If civilians die in the attack, anti-U.S. sentiment is bound to increase. Militants take advantage of the situation and are able to lure more Jihadis into their fold. Pakistan has been under pressure by the U.S.-led NATO forces to do more to crush the insurgency on the Pak-Afghan border. But no pressure should make the government allow foreign intervention into Pakistan."

"U.S. Should Recognize Our Sovereignty," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 5000) (04/02)

"The government's efficiency should not be limited to making verbal warnings to the U.S. [on drones]. Instead, it should devise a new strategy where the war on terror, Indo-Pak ties, and Pak-U.S. ties are treated separately. In this new strategy, the U.S. should be asked to stay away from Pakistani borders, and it should be asked to mount pressure on India to resolve the Kashmir issue. It should be made clear to the U.S. that even if the target is Al Qaeda, Pakistan will not allow the violation of its territory, security and sovereignty."

"Comparing Pakistan With Afghanistan," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (04/02)

"Pakistan has immense potential and a decisive role in the campaign against terrorism but regrettably our policy and decision-makers down-graded the country to a shameful low and it is exactly because of this that the United States is taking Pakistan for granted and insists on doing more without acknowledging its role and contribution. There would be no end to humiliation until and unless Pakistan adopts a nationalist approach to the issue and resists unfair demands and pressure of the West, which is nothing but recipe for all-round instability and insecurity."

"Show Will To Fight Terrorism," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (04/02)

"Needless to say, the attacks on America will come when they will come, but Pakistan is going to be the target in the coming few days. And if they are successful, they will be intensified so that the aim of demoralizing the people and defeating the state of Pakistan is achieved. America will be more prepared when the attacks come to it; it will have the will and the wherewithal to protect itself. But is Pakistan ready for what is coming?"

"Minister Of State's Appreciation For American Attacks," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (04/02)

"U.S. is launching unconcealed attacks on Pakistan, killing scores of innocent people, and now threatening to penetrate into Pakistani territory to launch military operations, but Pakistan's Minister of State for Defense Production is saying that the U.S. drone attacks have shown 80 percent success rate, and Taliban and Al Qaeda have been targeted precisely. This is the mindset that the U.S. is looking for in Pakistan, and even the suicide bombings inside Pakistan are actually meant to force ordinary people to feel that whatever America is doing is right."

"Alarming Situation," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/02)

"Claiming responsibility for the attack on the Manawan Police training school, leader of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan Baitullah Mehsud has vowed to teach the U.S. a lesson.... Unfortunately, while he cites the drone attacks as the main provocation, he avenges them by spilling blood in Pakistan. It is therefore quite clear that the extremist organization has no other agenda than to create panic."

"Danger In Dir," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/02)

"It seems quite clear that the forces that rampaged through Swat, creating terror and fear as they enforced their arcane version of

Islam, are now eager to do the same in Dir. It is time the provincial government roused itself from its slumber, gave up its pretence that all is well in Swat and began a real effort to tackle the militants who have in Dir once more proved just how deadly they can be."

"A Moment Lost," an op-ed by Kamila Hyat in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/02)

"The indications from Washington of plans to step up drone attacks on tribal areas in Pakistan are disturbing; there is talk, we hear, in Washington of 'carpet bombing' tracts of territory. Islamabad needs to make its US ally realize this will be disastrous. The mass U.S.-led NATO troop presence in Afghanistan has after all solved nothing at all. Seven years on, there is every possibility that Afghanistan could once more fall into Taliban hands. And, for reasons that are not difficult to understand, this complicates the situation in Pakistan as far as combating militancy goes, with agencies clearly thinking too of the future."

"Together We Can," an op-ed by Anjum Niaz in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/02)

"Enough! Bring Baitullah Mehsud to justice. If you can't, ask America to do it. And silence! All you handwringing hypocrites accusing Pakistan of killing its own people. Shame on you for being two-faced. These tribal thugs are destroying us and you say we should let them? Our military and the civilian spy agencies in tandem with their counter-terrorism outfit can drive a giant crater in the Taliban and Al-Qaeda ranks. The Lahore operation is a shining example of how success can be had if everyone comes together. Why then is there disharmony between the civilian government and the army to meld our spy agencies under a single entity? Are they suspicious of each other? Is there a power struggle? Or is there something else that we don't know? Whatever the reasons, the Americans are fast losing patience with our infantile tactics."

"The Handiwork Of Handicapped Hands," an op-ed by I.M. Mohsin in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/02)

"India has been trying to curry favor with Obama, particularly after the Mumbai tragedy. So she also figures in the regional group on AfPak but managing through tense diplomacy to escape being seen as part of the problem. Unfortunately, diplomatic niceties apart, once you review the objective realities in the area, you realize how much India contributes, consciously or unconsciously, to the status quo.... One can't help highlighting India's predicament to give a clear perspective to our friends who shy away from facing the ground realities.... Moreover, there is a feeling in Pakistan that India is working against Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan."

"Indian Intransigence," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/02)

"Dr. Singh's intransigence in ruling out the resumption of the composite dialogue until the result of the probe becomes visible can only be seen as an attempt at mounting pressure on Islamabad to hand over the culprits of the 26/11 tragedy to New Delhi. It bears repeating that Pakistan needs no lectures on showing zero tolerance to terrorism since it has suffered a lot from the growth of this menace after becoming a frontline state in the War On Terror."

"Need To Revive The Dialogue," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (04/02)

"The immediate need is to restore the confidence that earlier enabled Islamabad and New Delhi to engage with one another meaningfully.... One hopes that when the electoral exercise in India is over, the two neighbors will choose to adopt a pragmatic stance. Meanwhile, they should refrain from using the media to indulge in their blame game."

"Blow To ME Peace Prospects," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (04/02)

"The truth is that Israel enjoys a carte blanche from America for all its policies that include brazen violations of international treaties and war crimes during its forays into Arab lands. America's domestic politics is hostage to its powerful pro-Israeli lobby that rules out any effective action by any U.S. administration to pressure Israel into quitting Palestinian territories."

Patterson